University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Cultural Game Studies, PG_00216085						
Field of study	Historical Games and Digital Heritage						
Date of commencement of studies	October 2027		Academic year of realisation of subject		2028/2029		
Education level	Master's studies		Subject group		Obligatory subject group in the field of study		
Mode of study	full-time studies		Mode of delivery		e-learning		
Year of study	2		Language of instruction		English		
Semester of study	3		ECTS credits		2.0		
Learning profile	academic		Assessment form		credit		
Conducting unit							
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor		dr Ewelina Gdaniec				
	Teachers						
Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 30.0						
Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan		Participation in consultation hours		Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30		0.0		20.0	50
Subject objectives	The course develops a critical understanding of games as cultural products and practices that reflect, reproduce and transform social understandings of the past, identity and power. Students examine cultural representations in games, with particular attention to gender, colonialism, collective memory, marginalised communities and difficult heritage. The course strengthens their ability to critically assess stereotypes, ideological assumptions and contested interpretations, and to formulate responsible, historically grounded recommendations for researchers and game designers.						

Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[GHDCMU2_U06] Presents and substantiates positions on complex historical and design-related issues, using specialist terminology, adapting communication to different audiences, and engaging in debate while providing reasoned arguments in support of proposed solutions.	Presents and defends a critical interpretation of cultural representations in games and formulates recommendations informed by diverse social and historical perspectives.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion
	[GHDCMU2_U07] Uses English at a level of at least B2+ of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in spoken and written communication in academic and professional contexts, employing specialist terminology from history, game studies and digital heritage.	Uses specialist English-language terminology from Cultural Game Studies in critical game analysis, written argumentation and academic debate at B2+ level.	[SU8] observation of student's independent or team work
	[GHDCMU2_W02] Has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of concepts in historical and cultural game studies and their connections with historiography, particularly the relationships between game content, mechanics and technology, player agency and cultural context in the interpretation and representation of the past and the construction of historical knowledge.	Critically explains Cultural Game Studies concepts concerning the relationships between games, identity, representation, player practices and the social production of meaning, with particular attention to representations of the past.	[SW5] implementation of a problem task
	[GHDCMU2_K01] Is prepared to critically assess their own knowledge, beliefs and interpretations, as well as information received, in light of available evidence and feedback, and to recognise the importance of specialist knowledge and seek expert advice when facing difficulties in independently addressing cognitive and practical problems.	Critically reassesses personal cultural interpretations, recognising the limitations of personal knowledge, the experiences of represented communities and the need for expert consultation.	[SK2] presentation/project/paper/ report [SK8] observation of student's independent or team work
	[GHDCMU2_W05] Has knowledge and understanding of the legal, ethical, and social conditions governing the use of history and cultural heritage in research and creative activities, particularly issues related to copyright, the provenance and lawful use of resources, conflicts over historical memory, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence.	Analyses the legal, ethical and social dimensions of cultural representation in games, including stereotyping, cultural appropriation, contested memory, heritage ownership and creator responsibility.	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion [SW5] implementation of a problem task

<table>
<tr><td>Subject contents</td><td>1. Cultural Game Studies: games as social practices carrying values, norms and ideologies.
2. Culture and identity in gameworlds: representation, stereotypes, exclusion and cultural appropriation.
3. Social histories in games: gender, everyday life, sexuality, childhood and marginalised groups.
4. Colonialism and Indigenous histories: power, cultural ownership and decolonial approaches.
5. Cultural memory: national myths, nostalgia, difficult pasts and contested interpretations.
6. Players, fandom and modding: participatory reshaping of historical meanings and narratives.
7. Ethics of design and consultancy: community participation, diverse perspectives and creator responsibility.
8. Cultural representation audits and evidence-based recommendations for researchers and designers.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Prerequisites and co-requisites</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Assessment methods and criteria</td><td><table><tr><th>Subject passing criteria</th><th>Passing threshold</th><th>Percentage of the final grade</th></tr><tr><td>The Cultural Consultancy Challenge</td><td>51.0%</td><td>50.0%</td></tr><tr><td>case study</td><td>51.0%</td><td>50.0%</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Recommended reading</td><td><table><tr><td>Basic literature</td><td>1. Loban, R. (2024). Embedding Culture into Video Games and Game Design: The Palm, the Dogai and the Tombstone. CRC Press.
2. Keogh, B., Butt, M.-A. and Carter, M. (2026). Game Studies: A Critical Introduction to the Field. Polity.
3. Mäyrä, F. and Koskimaa, R. (eds). (2027). Cultural Game Studies: Critical Approaches.</td></tr><tr><td>Supplementary literature</td><td>1. Shaw, A. (2014). Gaming at the Edge: Sexuality and Gender at the Margins of Gamer Culture. University of Minnesota Press.
2. Mukherjee, S. (2017). Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back. Palgrave Macmillan.
3. Selected papers from: Digital Culture & Society (2025), 11(1): Digital Games through Muddled Pasts and Modded Histories.
4. Mochocki, M., P. Schreiber, J. Majewski, and Y. I. Kot (eds.) (2025). Central and Eastern European Histories and Heritages in Video Games. Routledge.</td></tr><tr><td>eResources addresses</td><td></td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><td>Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed</td><td>How do games reproduce or challenge colonial perspectives? Conduct a cultural representation audit and propose design recommendations.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Work placement</td><td>Not applicable</td></tr>
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